REPORT OF COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

KARCHMER IRON & METAL COMPANY 514 Washington Springfield, Missouri

JUN 1 1 1987

On May 26, 1987, at about 2:45 p.m., I visited the site and met with plant manager, Jim Vermillion and office manager, Harold Belcher.

I advised Mr. Vermillion of the allegations and he placed a call to Mr. Jim Aubuchon an attorney for the corporation in Dallas, Texas. Mr. Aubuchon requested that I submit the allegations to him in writing and advised Mr. Vermillion not to discuss the allegations with me. We did however tour the facility and noted the following:

Karchmer does presently, as they have for years, buy drums from industries and cut the tops out of them. The drums are emptied of any residues and used for storage or shipping of scrap metal parts or sold. Some are sheered and sold as scrap. The material removed from the drums, said to be less than one inch, is generally poured on the limestone gravel yard.

Batteries have dropped in value so they handle very few now. There were about 8-10 on a pallet stored in the yard. The waste oil from the maintenance shed is stored in a rectangular tank and hauled off by S.W. Oil of Carthage. There was some evidence of spilled or poured oily material on the lot flowing into the storm grate. This, I was told, was probably from a leaky drum or container that has since been removed.

Along the east fence there was a large pile of material said to be old steel turnings and dirt that had been removed from soft areas in the yard when patch work was done or from leveling and maintenance.

Steel drums are still received at the facility - mostly from General Electric, Burlington Northern, and Hough Dennis Oil Company. Drums are opened and dumped and used for metal scrap if reusable. Damaged drums are mashed and sheered for scrap metal. The Karchmer drivers have been instructed not to accept any drums that are not "empty" meaning less than one inch of product.

There are three grates in the yard — one in the north area that catches stormwater from the concreted area and pipes it to the other drain which is east of the office in the center of the yard. The latter drain was installed a couple of years ago.

There is another grate that is over a concrete pit, surrounded by a concrete surface that has two drains in it. One drain goes to an underground storage tank (septic tank) and the other drains to the surface near the railroad spur. Both drains were capped on May 27. This area was used for draining oil from turnings to prevent it from pooling on the lot or being hauled out with the turnings. This is no longer done because the turnings have now already been drained.

When questioned about the areas being covered by concrete Mr. Vermillion indicated it was to improve the working area and facilitate handling of the material. When questioned about pits being dug and chemicals dumped in them, he indicated there were two holes dug for placement of equipment. One was the sheerer which sets three feet into the ground and the other was for a baler.

Regarding the use of acids at the facility Messrs. Vermillion and Belcher advised that nitric acid had been used to try to remove zinc from copper but it was discontinued. They also contended that the gold recovery from computer tips was only done on a small scale and not by the company at the plant but individually by Mr. Belcher and that the activity was performed primarily off of the plant site.

There were only 10-12 drums stored along the east fence at the time of the investigation. There was evidence of material having been spilled or dumped in the storage area. Some of this material was oily in appearance.

The site is located adjacent to Jordon Creek apparently in the alluvium. The sides and floor of the creek channel have been concreted and the creek flows immediately to an underground storm drainage system traveling about 3/4 mile before opening again west of Grant Avenue.

The site is in a heavy industrial area among railroad tracks and undeveloped or vacated property. Jordan Creek, after it leaves the covered storm drainage system, flows through industrial/commercial property for about two miles before joining Fassnight Creek where they apparently form Wilson Creek.

The concrete walls of the creek adjacent to the site may be retarding the migration of contaminants from the site or changing the direction of flow.

Submitted by:

Charles L. Kroeger

Environmental Specialist Springfield Regional Office June 10, 1987

Date

JOHN ASHCROFT Governor

FREDERICK A. BRUNNER

Director



Division of Energy
Division of Environmental Quality
Division of Geology and Land Survey
Division of Management Services
Division of Parks, Recreation,
and Historic Preservation

STATE OF MISSOURI

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Springfield Regional Office 1155 East Cherokee Street Springfield, MO 65807 417-883-4033

Greene County/WMP

June 10, 1987

Mr. Jim Aubuchon P. O. Box 1046 Dallas, TX 75221

Dear Mr. Aubuchon:

Please find enclosed a copy of the complaint report on the Karchmer Iron & Metal Company at 514 Washington in Springfield, Missouri.

Our investigation into this matter is continuing as we obtain more information regarding the site and request guidance from our central office on how to proceed with the investigation.

Upon receipt of your responses we will send you a copy of our investigation report and entertain any additional comments.

Your prompt attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated. if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

SPRINGFIELD REGIONAL OFFICE

Charles L. Kroeger

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Environmental Specialist

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Enclosure

cc: Mr. Jim Vermillion, Plant Manger
Mr. Randy Lyman, Springfield Sanitary Services
Hazardous Waste Management, Enforcement Section

COMPLAINT ON KARCHMER IRON & METAL COMPANY 514 Washington Springfield, Missouri

On May 27, 1987, Lisa Rau with KY3 TV contacted me regarding information she had received about questionable waste handling practices at the Karchmer Iron & Metal Company at 514 Washington in Springfield, Missouri.

A former employee had contacted Ms. Rau and advised her of the following:

Karchmer had bought drums in the past from Litton, General Electric, Burlington Northern, Syntex, Solid State Circuits, Kraft and other local industries. The contents from two gallons to half a drum, were dumped on the gravel parking lot or down a storm drain. The drums were then cleaned up and sold. They had painted over labels and over stenciled printing that indicated the drums were not to be reused. About 1,500 drums were accumulated and sent to Kansas City where they were rejected and returned.

Karchmer had buried a lot of wastes including drums and covered the areas with concrete. A pit had been dug, wastes dumped into it, then gravel and concrete placed on top. Some of the waste that was dumped emitted fumes which cause people to pass out.

In 1983, they had put in an illegal drain to the storm sewers down which yard runoff, waste acids, etc. were flushed. This drain was installed at night and discharges to Jordon Creek. Much of the other "improper" work was also performed at night.

The company recovered gold from computer tips by dissolving the brass with acids. The green acid was neutralized then dumped onto the gravel lot where it foamed. Sometimes it pooled 3 - 4 inches deep. As a result of it eating up workers shoes, the company began providing work boots.

Barrels were stored and emptied along the northern and eastern fences. The dirt along the east fence is an old dumpsite.

In one instance a drum of HC1 leaked and the acid ate a hole in a drum of formaldehyde. The formaldehyde leaked releasing fumes which caused a problem with the workers.

Bladders removed from drums were placed in dumpsters and went to the landfill.

Information received indicates poor environmental activities are still occurring. Dumping on disposal areas are being covered with concrete.

Submitted by:

Charles L. Kroeger

Environmental Specialist

<u>June 10, 1987</u>

Date